



Victoria Primary School

Dearest VP Parents and Girls

2020-04-10

I am sure that you have heard that our lockdown has been extended by two weeks. Yesterday morning the school SMT had a Zoom meeting to discuss the way forward if this had to happen. We were not aware how pertinent our organising ahead would be.

As most of us on the SMT are parents we were sharing the 'pain' of how difficult it is to try to teach your own child with patience, to keep them entertained and to keep the peace in the household. I am sure that each family has experienced their own challenges. My son took the extra extension very badly as if we had made the rule. He tends to climb on the roof to get away from us every now and then. Which is why I found it amusing when his friend's mom sent me a photo of her son on the roof (No, girls that is not a good idea! Please don't try it at home). Mrs Orsmond informed us that her daughter, Isla asked her - to make very sure - that she wouldn't be in her mom's class next year and promptly told her that she prefers her own school to her home school. Mr Greyling has discovered how very difficult it is to be a Grade 00 teacher! So please know that we get just how very challenging this is for all of you.

The closing of schools has never happened in my lifetime and I was saying how unprecedented it is. I was taken aback when my mom sent our family a message this morning (especially in the wake of my son finding this lockdown as a prison sentence). She said that when she was young there was an outbreak of Polio and there was no vaccine for it at the time. Schools were closed and the children were kept at home. My dad comes from a family of five children, four of which are boys. During this time, my Ouma taught them all to knit to keep them entertained. My dad knits very well! I can't imagine what my Ouma had to go through, as from the stories my dad tells, they were very mischievous boys. They still are, come to think of it, even in their late seventies and early eighties. This story gives me hope for two reasons; one is that if my Ouma could cope with the four sons, I can cope with one (with technology thrown in to help me). The second is that a vaccine was discovered for that dreadful disease - hopefully we will see one for Covid-19 soon.

We had planned to focus on 'Resilience' as our 'Value' for Term 2. If we have ever needed this value it would be now. Resilience is often referred to as your ability to bounce back from the difficult times. For now, it will be the ability to bounce through the difficult times. As you may remember, the entire staff went on a resilience workshop at the end of last term. I was expecting it to give us tools on how to bounce back and what we got were certainly tools, but not what I was expecting. The facilitator's key focus was on changing "how we view things", "changing our attitude towards things" which in turn helps in "changing how we respond and act". If you view this lockdown as unfair and unreasonable, the atmosphere in your home will be all doom and gloom. I am so aware that this lockdown comes with a roller coaster of



emotions and it is not always possible to be positive all of the time and I think it is important to allow ourselves and our children time to 'mourn' and come to terms with so many changes, but I would like to encourage you to continually remind yourself to shift your mindset when you feel those dark clouds settling. I am sure many of you have seen this shared on social media but I would like to share it in this letter. Here's how we can change our mindset:

Change; 'I'm ready for life to go back to normal' to 'I have a new appreciation for the simple things in life'.

Change; 'I am tired of social distancing' to 'I am going to use my resources to connect with loved ones in new ways'.

Change; 'I am getting antsy about staying inside' to 'I am going to take this time to find new ways to enjoy being at home'.

Change; 'I am worried about what's happening' to 'I am grateful for my health and take comfort in knowing that I'm not in this alone'.

And my own one; Change; 'My son is driving me crazy' to 'I have never had so much time to connect and chat and discover what a really nice person he really is'.

Even as I wrote this I thought 'Yes, that's fine but can I think like this for another two weeks?'. Yes we can, we are resilient and we will push through. I also know that we will all come back with a new found respect and love for each other and what we have.

So to get down to business, we will be sending you extension work per grade on the D6 communicator. This work coverage will come to you in an SMS and an email and will not require any printing. You can simply read the work off your phone or PC and girls can complete it in their relevant books. We are very mindful that many of our VP families do not have PC's and Wifi at home, so we have opted for this platform to ensure that no one is excluded. As I have mentioned before, we are all too aware of how stressful teaching your own child can be, so we have tried to ensure that the work we send home will not include completely new concepts. Your daughter should be able to complete the tasks on her own with minimal input from you as a parent. Some of the work will be memo's for your daughter to mark her work that she should have already done. This will help her to see where she has gone wrong, to correct her own work and learn in the process. Some project work may be sent home too as we feel that the girls often find this fun and enjoyable.

I would also like you to please keep in mind that our term dates will obviously need to change and this will affect the current July holiday dates and more likely December too. This does mean that although we have lost many teaching days, many of these days will be made up within the new term dates set and we are certain that the Education Department will do their best to find a way to make up for lost time.

We aim for the work coverage to be sent out to you by Wednesday the 15th April at the latest. This, bearing in mind that many of our teachers and families will be celebrating Easter during this weekend and if that is you, I send you many blessings during this time.

If you have any questions or queries we request that you email the relevant teacher. This will ensure that you get a personal and detailed answer in return. If you are not sure of his/her



email address please send us an email on admin@victoriapprimary.co.za and we will send you the teacher's correct email.

Godspeed and stay resilient, VP family.

Warm regards,
Michelle Rafferty
Principal.